

First, because, he reasoned, Leonie was the most modest, though charming, young lady in the world. Next for the reason that he doubted if she cared enough for his society to endure his dull company through a long evening.

It was true he had called on her several times, had loaned her books, and at the Sunday school picnic she had been very gracious toward him. When he compared his quiet, sedate makeup with some of the brilliant village beaux, however, Elmer Dunscombe felt that he was in a decided minority. Sensitively he had tried to smother the budding love that had taken root in his heart.

With all his analysis of the present situation he could not get Leonie and the strange invitation out of his mind. Perhaps little Marvin had said more than he had been told to say. At all events, a few minutes before 8 o'clock that evening Mr. Dunscombe strolled in the direction of the Tripp home. An irresistible loadstone seemed to pull him along.

Then the timorous young man trembled quite as he noticed a light in the ell of the house, where seated in an arm chair was Leonie. Should he venture? Yes—no. Finally he mustered courage sufficient to open the gate. His heart beating mightily, he started around for the side entrance to the house.

He stood in the shadow near the steps, debating with himself as to the wisdom of a call. He could see the face of the lovely girl in the arm chair now. Leonie was asleep. Her sweet face reminded him of a beautiful rose. He longed to kiss those drooping eyelids.

Mr. Dunscombe started back as a muffled figure darted around the side of the house.

"Hey, you!" spoke quick cautious tones, "take this stuff and keep a close lookout. The girl is doped and it's a chance to ransack the rest of the bedrooms."

The speaker thrust a small bag

into the grasp of the astounded Mr. Dunscombe, dashed away and the startled reverend "woke up."

"Why, it's a burglary!" he gasped. "That man took me for a confederate, who is somewhere around. They have chloroformed Miss Tripp and are looting the house! I must act!" and he dashed up the steps. The screen door was hooked on the inside. Mr. Dunscombe tore it open with a wrench, darted across the floor to the telephone and took up the receiver.

"Central!" he shouted, "send the police at once to Mr. Tripp's home. It is being burglarized!" he added excitedly.

Then, with a distracted look at the helpless Leonie, he ran at a baseball bat belonging to Marvin standing up in a corner of the room, seized it and ran out on the porch.

But his call had been heard. He noted a racket as of some one coming down the stairs. Then a sharp whistle and two slinking forms made for the street and disappeared amid the night shadows.

All the thoughts of Rev. Mr. Dunscombe were for Leonie now. He returned to the ell room. There was a dead taint of chloroform in the air. He threw up all the windows. He dashed into the kitchen and returned with a wetted towel. He placed it across the brow of the insensible girl. She moved, sighed faintly and breathed more freely. He hovered about her, anxious and distressed.

Soon some one would come, he felt sure, in response to his message of alarm. Ah, these were precious moments. That lovely face drew him nearer—nearer. He could not help it! The tempting lips were so close! He pressed one fervent kiss upon them and then drew back, aghast at his impulsive temerity—his conscience named it "treachery."

There was a knock at the door and there he confronted Lettie Bond, gazing in with wonder-filled eyes,